

must be considered. But, in the present case, the choice involves not merely priority, but also comparison between the objective validity of two names *as indications of the species*.

In this sense, there can be little doubt that *Xiphias platypterus* Shaw & Nodder is superior. This fact outweighs any temporary inconvenience caused by a name change. Other name changes may well follow revision of the several nominal Indo-Pacific species of *Istiophorus*, perhaps resulting in the recognition of a single species. That species should be based on an accurate description and type specimen, both of which pertain to *Xiphias platypterus* Shaw & Nodder; neither of which pertain to *Scomber gladius* Bloch.

My application is, therefore, not withdrawn.

#### FURTHER COMMENTS BY HENNING LEMCHE

Z.N.(S.) 1657

Mr. Whitehead seems to have slightly misunderstood my attitude in the case of *Scomber gladius*, maybe because he may not have realised that I have no personal preference but that as a Commissioner I will have to vote against his application as the reasons for adopting it do not appear sufficiently strong to me.

I have never asked Mr. Whitehead to establish a neotype for *Scomber gladius*, but I have asked for the reasons why Mr. Whitehead has not himself clarified the issue simply by selecting the specimen in the British Museum as the lectotype. Such a procedure would make that name unambiguous, and clarifications of this sort are commonplace in taxonomy.

The introduction in the Rules of the completely new principle advocated by Mr. Whitehead of nomenclatorial (sic!) stability versus a verbal one would probably be most disturbing. It has never been practice to consider the name used in the better description as thereby being the one to be preserved even against general usage.

On the other hand, if the specialists concerned do support Mr. Whitehead's proposal to the exclusion of the one mentioned by me, I would imagine that my attitude would become influenced.

The misinterpretations of Article 23(b) which form the basis of many protests against its application do not need to be discussed here, as they may soon be officially treated in some manner.

#### REPLY TO HENNING LEMCHE'S COMMENT

By P. J. Whitehead

The three points in Commissioner Henning Lemche's comment can be briefly answered.

1. *Lectotype designation*: the British Museum Banksian sailfish, undoubted holotype of *Xiphias platypterus* Shaw & Nodder, could be designated *neotype*, not *lectotype*. The Code clearly indicates that a *lectotype* be chosen only from syntypal material. The specimen is not one examined by Bloch. *Lectotype* designation might be made under the Plenary Powers, but the designation of this specimen as type of *Scomber gladius* Bloch would be most improper because,

- (a) Bloch's description (text) has been almost universally condemned since Günther (1868, *Cat. Fish. Brit. Mus.*, 2 : 513),
- (b) but authors have accepted Bloch's figure (albeit with misgivings since it shows a "generic hybrid" between the swordfish, *Xiphias gladius* L., and a species of sailfish, *Istiophorus*),
- (c) however, *Scomber gladius* Bloch has been unequivocally restricted to an *Atlantic* species by Whitley (1955, *Austral. Mus. Mag.*, 11 (12) : 382) (on Bloch's figure only—see my reply to Prof. Robin's comment).

Bloch cites but criticises Broussonet's description of the Banksian specimen.

Since Broussonet's description is fair, it must be presumed that Bloch's material (or at least concept of the species) differed sufficiently from the specimen which Commissioner Lemche now suggests as type, for Bloch to comment.

2. *Usage and acceptability*: Prof. Robins and other scombroid specialists favour recognition of a single Indo-W. Pacific species of sailfish. In Japanese waters the name *I. orientalis* (Temm. & Schleg.) has hitherto been consistently applied; the senior synonym to replace it will be immaterial since either of the two in question will temporarily upset popular literature. In the Indian Ocean, the name "*gladius*" has been generally used. But all scombroid specialists who have made their opinion known have been in favour of resurrecting the name "*platypterus*", and a number of other ichthyologists have concurred.

3. *Nomenclatural stability*: in many cases, the merit of a particular name over another is decided solely on the grounds of priority of publication. In the present case, however, the issue is not priority, but priority *versus* conservation. This results from Article 23(b), the prior claim of *platypterus* requiring support from other factors. The chief of these is the concept to which the names "*platypterus*" and "*gladius*" were first attached. A ruling in favour of the name "*gladius*" will render the concept to which it was attached so altered that the author would neither recognise it, nor (apparently) accept the type specimen provided for him.

However, a ruling in favour of the name "*platypterus*" would preserve the original author's concept (i.e. description and type specimen), and such an action seems to embody a more fundamental degree of stability than the arbitrary retention of an extremely dubious name. It is in this sense that a purely verbal stability was contrasted with a nomenclatural stability. The necessity for this is not new; it is inherent in Article 23(b) in which the basic Law of Priority is placed in opposition to another principle (i.e. conservation).

By C. R. Robins (*Institute of Marine Science, University of Miami, U.S.A.*)

Although the writer supports Dr. Whitehead's principal position he wishes to clarify several points.

1. The sailfishes, *Istiophorus*, have never been subjected to systematic review and their taxonomy is definitely unsettled. Most workers who have concerned themselves with the problem have concluded that there is but one species in the Atlantic Ocean though admittedly few specimens have been recorded from the African sector of the Atlantic (and these unavailable for study). To this species most now apply the name *Istiophorus albicans* Latreille, 1824 (*Nouv. Dict. Hist. Nat.*, Paris, ed. 1, vol. 24: 104) (latinization of makaira blanchâtre of Bosc in turn based on Marcgrav's Guebucu). Modern use of this stems from Whitley, 1931 (*Rec. Austral. Mus.*, vol. 20, no. 1: 16-17) who in turn was followed by Fowler (*Proc. Acad. nat. Sci. Philadelphia*, 1941, vol. 93: 84-85; *Monogr. Acad. nat. Sci. Philadelphia*, 1945, no. 7: 290-291). The eastern part of the Pacific ocean also seems to have one species of *Istiophorus* whose features differ somewhat from *albicans*. To this species the name *I. greyi* has been regularly applied; *I. orientalis* Temminck and Schlegel, 1842 has been used less often, especially in recent years. Least is known about the sailfishes of the vast Indo-Pacific region. As noted by Mr. Whitehead, recent reports have favoured the recognition of one species in that region and the name *I. gladius* (Bloch) has often been used, especially recently. To this correspondent the sailfish of the Indo-West Pacific differs from that of the Atlantic but no comment is offered on the distinction of *gladius* and *greyi*. Other later names are available but they are not pertinent to this discussion.

2. *Scomber gladius* Bloch is, as noted by Whitehead, based on references to sailfishes from the Indian and the Atlantic oceans (Broussonet and Marcgrav, respectively) and hence on two species. What Mr. Whitehead has not noted is that Goode, 1882 (*Proc. U.S. nat. Mus.*, vol. 4 [1881]: 424-425), separated the Atlantic and Indian ocean sailfishes applying to the latter the name *Istiophorus gladius*. He particularly discusses this restriction on page 426 (erroneously considering Broussonet to be the author of *gladius*) stating (page 426 that *gladius* was based largely on a stuffed speci-